

National Catholic Theatre Conference

PRODUCTION CALENDAR

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A PHOTOGRAPHIC HUDDLE

Eric Bender, a photographer of note and judge of Row-Peterson's photographic contest in 1945 gives sound post-mortem advice to contestants in the October-November issue of *Lagniappe*, a quarterly house organ distributed without charge by Row Peterson from its Evanston, Illinois, office. We have, with permission, quoted the following excerpts from Mr. Bender's article:

"Let me emphasize the following point above all others: a full stage picture isn't necessarily the best picture...This is the case when a picture shows two people at center stage looking at each other, and nine other persons just standing around. In too many pictures they are standing in that singularly wooden position; heels together, toes out at 30 degrees, hands at the side, faces without expression. Of course, we know that people temporarily out of action must not interfere with what's going on, but they don't help the picture.

"Such a picture does not illustrate the action or spirit of the play, because that's not how a play is seen. The audience sees only those persons carrying on the action. But in a photograph of the scene you see these other characters as instantly as you see the important ones. What's the moral?...Recognize the difference between a camera's eye and a human eye."

Mr. Bender drives home his point in describing the prize-winning pictures. Of the 1st Prize winner he says: "There is a center of interest here. Something is going on and everybody is taking part in it. Every face and every posture contributes directly to the tension of the moment...And the picture is technically very good as regards lighting, exposure, printing, etc." The 2nd Prize winner, a scene from "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," Mr. Bender also praises: "There are seventeen people here, and every one of them is doing something to contribute to the mood and action of the scene. Of the seventeen, sixteen are sitting, but please note that they are not perched woodenly on the benches like clothing store dummies. Just from the picture, wouldn't you like to know what the

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THINKING OF "BERNADETTE"?

The general release of "The Song of Bernadette" to amateur groups has been withdrawn by Dramatic Publishing Company. If the professional production will not visit your town you may obtain a special release, but it is of first importance that you check with the publisher before making any plans for performances. This announcement is a disappointment to many we know; we are sorry that the Conference cannot help you.

Present plans call for stops by the professional company at: Providence 3/14; Northampton 3/15; Hartford 3/16; Boston 3/18 for two weeks; thereafter Montreal, Toronto, and other stops not yet scheduled. Because no scenery will need to be transported, "Bernadette" will visit more than the usual number of towns.

PATRON SAINT

Conference members during January added to the roster of Saints from which one is to be chosen this month as NCTC patron. The entire list includes:

Archangel Gabriel - "who heralded the world's most thrilling and beautiful drama."

Archangel Raphael - "whose earthly mission was to play a part."

St. Francis of Assisi - "Jongleur de Dieu"

St. Genesius - "patron of actors," a Roman who in playing the part of a Christian martyr received at the moment of his stage baptism the faith, and courage to remove his mask."

St. John Bosco - "who during his high school years organized a boys' club which considered the stage one of its leading features; later as a priest he envisioned the theatre as a most powerful means of education, and by writing and staging plays he established a place for theatre in the Salesian Schools here and abroad."

St. Philip Neri - "who possessed so delightful a sense of the dramatic."

St. Thomas More - "since native English drama was probably 'born in his house'."

St. Vitus - "regarded as patron of comedians."

Father Donohue suggests that we disqualify St. Jude - "all is not lost."

Group members are asked to indicate their choice on the postal sent to them for Calendar items. Individual members are urged to send us their votes too.

MID-WEST PLAY FESTIVAL

First announcement of the Mid-West Play Festival, sponsored jointly by Loras Academy and the Central Region of NCTC, has just been released. Outspoken demand for the return of the Festival has put Father Schroeder, Chairman, to work again after his war-time rest.

The Festival, to be held at Loras Academy, Dubuque, May 3, 4, and 5, is open to all Catholic high schools and academies in Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois. Social events in conjunction with the Festival have also been arranged.

As is customary, after each session of plays the judges will discuss with directors and members of the play groups the merits and faults of each of the productions.

Groups intending to participate in the Festival are asked to notify Rev. K. G. Schroeder at Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa, as soon as possible. Play selections must be reported before March 30 at which time directors may apply for rehearsal time the eve of the Festival.

A PHOTOGRAPHIC HUDDLE

(Continued from Front Page)

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Further discussion of awards we must eliminate here, but we should like to highlight the advice Mr. Bender gives as a judge to the photograph-choosers: one person who has moved in the picture destroys the whole; in trying to supply plenty of light in the picture, be sure your backdrop hasn't ten foot shadows; a picture of your nice set and the whole cast including prop assistants is fine as a souvenir but no good for a contest; if the judges realized that Egbert was standing up straight for once in his life and Joyce's legs looked thinner in a certain picture, they might be more appreciative but they can judge the picture only as a picture; to the chooser who thought that three actors standing at one end of the davenport and two at the other end would make a dramatic grouping with the empty davenport between signifying they were far apart in spirit, Mr. Bender says, "What is this - a furniture catalogue?"

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Professor Milton Smith of Columbia claims that the secret of good pictures is enough pictures. Take twenty - perhaps you may get one good picture.



THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS

PLEASE RETURN TO
NATIONAL CATHOLIC THEATRE CONFERENCE
316 WEST 57th STREET
NEW YORK, 19, N. Y.

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CROSS COUNTRY CIRCUIT - FEBRUARY

Albany - Blackfriars' Guild will produce "Over Twenty-One".

Chicago - Freshmen of Academy of Our Lady appear in four one-act plays the last of February: "Ghost of a Freshman," "The Uninvited Member," "Ghost in the Green Gown," and "Betty Behave."

De Paul University announces a production of "The Little Foxes."

Cincinnati - At Our Lady of Cincinnati College Edgecliff Players will present scenes from "Much Ado About Nothing" and "The Taming of the Shrew" Feb. 13.

Cleveland - The Senior Class of Notre Dame Academy offers four performances of "Murder in a Nunnery" Feb. 22, 24, 26, 27.

Davenport - Cameo Players, with combined glee clubs of Immaculate Conception Academy and St. Ambrose Academy, present "The Mikado" Feb. 24-25. Fourteen Senior Cameo Players will compete Feb. 28 for the annual Churchill Memorial Award.

Dayton - Blackfriars' Guild offers two performances of "Through the Night" on Feb. 23-24.

Detroit - Catholic Theatre of Detroit's production of "Storm", goal of two months strenuous effort, is scheduled for Feb. 14, 15, 16. Children's Stage presents "Tatters and Rags" morning and afternoon Feb. 15.

Dubuque - Hyacinth on Wheels" has been chosen by Clarke College Players for Feb. 27 production.

Loras College Players offer Shakespeare's Richard III Feb. 23, 24, 25,

El Paso - Loretto Players on Feb. 10 present "He Couldn't Marry Five,"

Green Bay - Central Catholic High School, augmenting its two major public productions, has scheduled a private showing of "The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife" on Feb. 28.

Jamestown, N.D. - The Curtain Call Club, newly organized dramatic group at St.

John's Academy, features a tournament of one-act plays for Club members Feb. 22-24.

Joliet - Little Theatre of College of St. Francis continues its weekly radio series from its own studios.

Los Angeles - Victory Players, St. Agnes High School offer mid-February "So She

• Made a Novena" and "White Harvest", two one-act plays in a series focusing attention on vocations. The latter is an original by Senior Class Student Patricia Hawkins.

Minneapolis - Junior Drama Class of Academy of Holy Angels presents "The First Dance" Feb. 10; on Feb. 24 a combined departmental offering is entitled "If He Could Speak."

New Orleans - Thalpomaniacs at Ursuline College compete in acting and direction for one-act play tournament prize. Also announced for this month is production of a Quintero Play in translation to celebrate Pan-American Day.

New York - Blackfriars' warmly received tragedy of manners, "A Young American," continues at 57th Street until February 11.

At Jackson Heights St. Joan of Arc Theatre Guild offers for its second production of its seventh season "Blithe Spirit." Feb. 12, 13, 14, 15.

Oakland - Two performances in the series of one-act plays which is building interest toward the major production are listed by the Elizabethans of St. Elizabeth High School: Feb. 1, "Just before the Prom:", Feb. 2, "High School Daze."

Pittsburgh - Catholic Theatre Guild offers "Song Out of Sorrow" Feb. 21-22, with an ex-serviceman in the lead.

Philadelphia - On Feb. 22-23 West Catholic Dramatic Group of West Catholic Boys' High School will present "Abie's Irish Rose."

Racine - "The Great Big Doorstep" is being rehearsed with a double cast from St. Catherine's High School Players. The "twins" are students from a near-by grade school.

San Francisco - "Brother Orchid," directed by Mrs. John Garzero, is scheduled for Feb. 8 - 10 performances by Salesian Boys' Club. Salesian Girls follow with gala minstrel Feb. 27, Mar. 1 and 3.

Waterloo, Ia. - St. Mary's High School Seniors have scheduled three one-act plays for Feb. 27: "My Lady's Lace," "The Lord's Prayer," "Over the Hills,"

West Hartford - Queens's Company of St. Joseph College for its annual Shakespearean production "As You Like It," Dates: Feb. 15-16. Projected scenery.

Wichita - The Genesians at Mt. Carmel Academy announce two one-act plays for Feb. 1: "Thanks Awfully" and "Shakespeare's Ladies." On Feb. 14 a Valentine program, "Love in Lyric Poetry," will combine choral verse reading and song.

QUESTION PERIOD - THE PLAY LIST

How were titles for the Play List chosen? The plays recommended by the Mid-West Regional Play Committee, appointed by Mr. Costello in 1942, formed the basis of the current list. Knowing it could not attempt a complete list at one blow, the 1944-45 Committee was satisfied to consider the mass of information compiled by its predecessor as a good starting point.

Why isn't the list broken down into high school, college, and community theatre? What you consider high school material may not agree with the next member's standard. One NCTC member, scorning "high school" offerings chose "The Old Ladies," calling for three women all over 45 years of age; should this be labelled high school theatre?

May I submit for grading a title for the supplement? Yes, we shall be happy to add to the list now being compiled for consideration by the Committee the title of any play you think worthwhile. Be sure to include the name of the author; information regarding publisher, cast and sets will be welcome. Remember appearance of a title on the list is in itself, a recommendation!

I notice the "xs" (extras) always appear beside the male cast; does this mean that all extras called for are men? No; extras are unspecified as to sex and number.

In a few cases (e.g. Chanticleer, Alice in Wonderland) where there must be parts for girls the total cast is listed under M; why? We tried to indicate that parts in some plays were interchangeable by placing the total cast number midway between M and F, but the mimeographer misinterpreted. We are confident, however, that you will not confuse these few plays with all-male cast plays.

Why are some names under Author in caps and some in small type? The playwright is listed in caps; in adaptations, the author's name appears in caps, and the adaptor's follows the "/" in small type.

How may I obtain an extra copy of the Play List for my friends? You may not. The list is for Conference members only. We cannot supply additional copies; we urge you, therefore, to lend yours or to give yours to no one.

Errata: PTUNELLA (title) should read PRUNELLA; VRIDIE (author, Tobias and the Angel) should read BRIDIE.

MARGIN NOTES

Rev. John J. Walsh, S.J., back at St. Mary's College, Kansas, after an assignment as Army Camp Chaplain, has accepted with enthusiasm the Play-Listing Committee chairmanship. Conference members will welcome his leadership in the framing of the first supplement of NCTC's Play List. Father Walsh has been a steady contributor to the work since the Play List's early Mid-West Region days.

Dr. Lapierre, noted organist and composer from Montreal, has written operas in French which can be made available to Conference members seeking this material.

Louisville enjoyed its Catholic Theatre Guild production of "Career Angel", Jan. 27-28. During Lent the Guild will stage "Embezzled Heaven." Rights for the latter, by the way, must be obtained from Dr. Edmond Pauker, 1639 Broadway, N.Y. 19.

Sister Mary Donatus, I.H.M., made a special adaptation of "Cyrano de Bergerac" for Cup and Curtain Players' Jan. 16 performances. And the Players "adapted" the reverse side of their old "Twelfth Night" unit set for scenery.

Richmond's Catholic Theatre Guild tried its voice at Reader's Theatre (see Dec. calendar) on Jan. 8 under the direction of Lillian Santucci.

Catholic Theatre of Detroit has made it possible for the Conference to service more requests for reading copies of "Storm" by supplying two of the scripts prepared for Detroit's production this month. Mrs. Mirick, the author of the CU hit, we announce proudly, is our most recent conference member.

In the Springfield Diocesan CYO Dramatic Finals on Jan. 13th St. Boniface Players of Quincy were awarded first place for their production of "Georgie Porgie", Eleanor Lawless was titled "best actress" for her part in "Mooncalf Mugford" presented by Blessed Sacrament CYO, representing Springfield, and Chet Hagnauer "best actor" for his role of Junior in "Junior Buys a Car," the offering of Sacred Heart CYO, Granite City, which was awarded second place for production. The cry for better plays, so often a post-script of one-act contests, places a recommended one-act play list high on the Conference agenda.

"The Liar," first of Cu's series this season, is scheduled for Broadway next fall with Alfred Drake in the lead.

VISITORS TO NEW YORK

Father O'Kane and Father Dubee, Chairmen, in order, of South Atlantic and Canadian Regions, unable to reach N.Y. for the Executive Board session Dec. 28, managed trips the following week.

Father O'Kane Catholic Theatre Guild, having put itself on its feet financially with a religious articles store servicing the Richmond area, which now is to be handled by an army veteran, has scored other major achievements; offer of any time the group cared to use on Richmond's radio station Christmas Eve, tuition scholarship for one of its talented choral group at NY's Chief music school, and new furnishings for headquarters. The Guild returns this Lent to its pre-war Passion Play. 150 cast members to play Richmond and Raleigh.

Father Dubee's St. Genesius Players' Guild in Montreal likewise placed emphasis on music. His choral group has been building audiences by providing the vocal program which accompanied Montreal's Catholic Hour for the past few months. Special work is being done by the Players in radio-writing, and Father Dubee collected the newest volumes on radio production and writing while in NY.

From Eddystone, Pennsylvania, the same week came Conference member Rev. J. R. Hanlon, currently directing a production of "Arsenic and Old Lace." Last year the high peak in Eddystone audiences was reached when 250 saw "Bernadette."

Sister Mary Peter, O.P., President of Rosary College, was in town briefly during January. Plans for Rosary's new theatre are completed and construction will be commenced when materials are available, by spring at latest Sister hopes.

Emmet Lavery left for Hollywood after a hit-run for "Magnificent Yankee" was definitely established. The following Sunday's Herald Tribune Drama Section gave its first column to praising the play: "Calhern has something to work with. Lavery has written a script in which shrewd articulation of plot is so veiled by captivating human drama that his craftsmanship may be overlooked."

Mr. Lavery's hour before traintime was spent at Mary Margaret McBride's microphones with Arthur Hopkins and Louis Calhern. If you were listening you heard much deserved praise for NCTC's former President and a sideline discussion of Hopkins' theory of directing.

BROADWAY COMMENTS

by Mrs. Christopher Wyatt

Magnificent Yankee, The - Very human and sympathetic picture of married love between two unusual people. Emmet Lavery's charming and witty contribution to Americana superbly played by Louis Calhern and Dorothy Gish.

Nellie Bly - Not quite up to Moore and Gaxton former musicals, but they themselves are as good as ever.

O Mistress Mine - The title unfortunately is true as to the social status of the heroine, which is remedied by Act 3. The Lunts are at their very best and their charm and humor so enriches the play it is difficult to appraise it on its own merits.

Show Boat - No matter how pleasant the memory of the original this generous revival can bear full comparison. The music has become a part of our American life and the new cast does justice to it.

Winter's Tale, The - The Theatre Guild presents a lavish production but takes rather too seriously one of Shakespeare's dramatic mistakes.

Would-Be Gentleman, The - It almost seems as if Moliere had Bobby Clark in mind, so easily does the burlesque method of comedy keep in tune with the text. For any one who likes Clark, he is at his best.

NCTC - ICTC

With last month's inquiry from Ireland and the application this month of Southern Cross Library Party Ltd., Sydney, New South Wales, for Conference membership, the National in our title begins to give ground to international.

So long as NCTC means the pooling of the best talent in Catholic theatre it will attract groups struggling alone for high theatre standards. To our knowledge there is no such cooperative effort elsewhere. Though there have been lone voices in every country, strong men whose influence was felt by actor-bands and large audiences, in the Conference alone do we find a nationwide zeal among local leaders in Catholic theatre to help each other.

A copy of "Shadow of the Tree", the subject of several recent postal inquiries, is now in our library. The drama about Edmund Campion was written by Rev. Arthur McGratty, S.J., now in the Navy, and is published by Catholic Dramatic Movement.

